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AUTHOR Marfurt, Rose Marie A.
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ABSTRACT

Suggestions are given for structuring an eight-semester undergraduate foreign language major with a specialization in translating and interpreting from the target language into English. The program includes three training stages: theoretical training in the discipline, practice in the discipline, and expansion of general knowledge. Course topics include an introduction to the art of translating, development of listening skills, translation from English into the target language, discussions in the target language on a variety of topics, contemporary cultural aspects, exercises in translation, introduction to foreign language literature, masterpieces in foreign language literature, translation of specific subject matter, onsight translation onto tape, simultaneous intepreting exercises in a simulated conference situation, consecutive interpretation, commercial and legal translation, and technical translation. Experience in translating both from English to the target language and from the target language to English is provided. Study abroad is strongly encouraged, and other program options include courses in technical and creative writing, public speaking, communications, other foreign languages, traditional liberal arts, and subject-related courses such as business administration or sciences. The program is designed to train students for graduate study in translating and interpreting, provides further training in a translator firm, and provides the student with an internship with an international firm overseas. (MSE)

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INITIATION OF AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM DESIGNED TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR A CAREER IN TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING

Dr. Rose Marie A. Marfurt

University of Missouri, Kansas City
4025 West 94th Street
Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66207 U.S.A.

(616) 276-1311

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Initiation of an Academic Program Designed to Prepare Students for a Career in Translating and Interpreting

Rose Marie A. Marfurt, University of Missouri at Kansas City

The task to prepare young American students for studies in translation and interpretation which some American universities have undertaken seems almost unreal when we take into consideration the short time at their disposal, and the lack of adequate language skills.

However, taking into account the decreasing enrollment in the upper-level courses at many universities, the integration of a translation or even interpretation component into already existing courses seems to be a step towards a practical option for students.

From my long experience in language teaching at the university level in the United States I have learned that the students are very little aware of career possibilities in which languages are most likely to be needed and the ways in which foreign language skills can be useful in individual professions.

The most practical method for the creation of a B.A. in translation program at an American university is to lead second-year language students into courses which are already listed in the catalog, i.e., they must satisfy the general requirements and the degree requirement, a total of minimum 120 hours, from which a minimum of 30 hours above the first-year level must be taken by a foreign language major with a specialization in translating and interpreting from the source language into English. Working into the target language at the undergraduate level might be beyond the range of the students.

My suggestions for structuring such a program are based on my teaching experience at the Interpreter School of Zurich, Switzerland, and on that as translator/interpreter in diplomatic missions and encompass three stages of training:

a. Theoretical training in the discipline

b. Practice in the discipline

c. Expansion of general knowledge

On the first two pages of my hand-outs, I have listed the titles of the required courses for the major, as well as for all general requirements and elective courses, in which the student must enroll during the eight semesters of study. But I would like to give you a more detailed description of the structure of the required language courses for the major and their importance in the curriculum, as well as an explanation for the necessity for the general requirements and the elective courses.

The program starts on the second-year foreign language level, because the first-year eight hour course cannot be counted towards a major.

Second Year First Semester

200 Introduction to the Art of Translating (3). Students work from English into the target language on an intermediate level. Focus lies on the linguistic ability. Teaching of the judicious use of dictionaries . Stress on fact, that information obtained from them is not as important as understanding of the context.

250 Development of Listening Skills (1). Rendering of news items of medium difficulty read by instructor or recorded on tape. Vocabulary discussion in previous class period. Assigned as essay for following class period.

Second Year Second Semester

255 Translation from English into the Target Language (3). Stress lies on expressing all elements of meaning without imitating source language structure. Learning special techniques by using context and situation. Discussion of main ideas of source text.

280 Discussions in the Target Language on a Wide Range of Topics (2). Politics, technology, economics, history, religion. Emphasis lies on awareness and identification of cultural peculiarities, speaking patterns, regional accents.

Third Year First Semester

380 Contemporary Cultural Aspects Studies (3). Taught in target language,

complemented by dicussions in target language. Contents geared to the contemporary situation of the foreign culture area. Aspects: Culture, politics, society, religion, social classes. Analysis of artistic and intellectuel development in the foreign culture.

355 Exercises in Translation from the Source Language into the Target Language (3). Based on techniques taught in 200 and 255. Course aims at enrichment of vocabulary, improvement of use of idioms, rendering of nuances of style and meaning into the target language. Stress on the use of terminology and phraseology of specific area.

360 Introduction to Foreign Language Literature (3). Introduction to the study of different genres of literature and techniques of criticism. Readings include representative works of major authors from various periods.

Third Year Second Semester

370 Masterpieces of Foreign Language Literature (3). An introduction to the history of the foreign language literature from the Middle Ages to 1900 stressing the historical context, the major literary movements, and the development of the various genres. Selected readings of the works of the major authors.

350 Development of Listening Skills (1). Rendering news items of advanced difficulty in target language. Identical to F.L. 250. No previous discussion of vocabulary.

355 Translation of Specific Subject Matters (2). Concentration on message of texts, special terminology related to political science, law, commerce. From English into target language. Criticism of texts translated by students for improvement of structure in translation. Preparation of glossary of technical vocabulary.

Fourth Year First Semester

410 Introduction to Onsight Translation onto Tape (1). From source language to target language and vice-versa. This lab-session is geared to the training in oral translation, followed by tape transcription. Practice in expressing a statement in the source language using a different structure.

455 Simultaneous Interpreting Exercises in a Simulated Conference Situation (3). Instructor plays role of speaker (English or target language). Rendering of ideas rather than words. The interpreter is expected to understand the ideas expressed. Challenging exercise, absence of prompter.

480 Contemporary Cultural Aspects Studies (3). Similar to 380, but stressing cross-cultural aspects.

Fourth Year Second Semester

490 Consecutive Interpretation into English or Target Language (3). Practice in "short" interpretation, i.e. oral translation given sentence by sentence, or "long" interpretation, given after a segment of the speech, 5 to 7 minutes, using note-taking techniques. Speaker and interpreter take turns. Expressing ideas as accurately as possible in the target language or in English. Rendition does not involve summarizing.

470 Commercial and Legal Translation (2). Introduction to the subtleties of the translation of commercial, financial and legal texts. Study of the terminology and resource material and effective dictionary use. (Specific technical knowledge should have been acquired in the elective courses).

480 Technical Translation (2). Familiarization with research tools. Stressing clarity and precision of expression. Technical insight should have been acquired in elective courses.

Study Abroad

It is furthermore of great value to the student to spend one or two summers in the country where the target language is spoken in order to improve the oral skills.

On page 2 of my hand-outs I made some suggestions with regard to the general requirements and electives for a 4-year plan of study. But since the development of the skills of a translator must begin with a very broad general education, which is an essential preparation for the successful completion of these challenging courses, it seems to me that a sound knowledge of the source language, in this case English, and also an above-average writing ability, are the basic foundations for translation studies.

After completing all basic courses in English, it is advisable to enroll in courses of English structure, creative writing, theory and practice of composition, surveys of literature, technical writing, a very practical course for technical translators. It is also of importance to enroll in public speaking and communication courses, since communication of ideas is the translator's business.

Extremely helpful are studies of another foreign language, 18 hours required for a minor in most universities, which is also a requirement for being accepted for graduate studies in a translator school.

Studies in business and administration are very useful for commercial translators, as well as economics. Furthermore, recommended are studies in mathematics and sciences for the technical translator, and in social sciences and philosophy--a translator must be capable of logical, analytical thought--and in psychology.

The student, who has now earned a B.A. in translating and interpreting, is now ready to be accepted in a graduate school offering one or two year master's degree programs in translation and interpretation.

Another option for the student who graduated with a B.A. in translation, is to enter a translator firm as a trainee, where he would work from one to three years under the supervision of an expert translator, and then apply for the accreditation examination, administered by the American Translators Association

Another possibility to be investigated by the university is an internship with an international firm overseas where the young translator could work under the supervision of an expert and thus find himself in a real working situation, and at the same time be exposed to the various cultural differences.

The chances of being employed as an in-house translator in a large international company or by the Federal Government will then be much greater.

This B.A. in Translation program could also be of interest for foreign language teachers who are not on a permanent assignment or who would like to change profession. Intensive summer-programs could be arranged, offering up to 12 credit hours per summer. The hours of required course work would be

reduced to 20 or 24, since the teachers have already a high language competence and a sound basis in grammar and stylistics.

Now, to come to a conclusion: Who should become a translator? I quote from J.B. Sykes' Translator Manual:

> Although not yet amenable to scientific proof, the proposition that translators are born, not made, is generally considered tenable among the members of the translating profession. This implies that the good translator has special inborn talents and attributes with which the not-so-good translator is not endowed to the same degree, if at all. What, then, are these special endowments? The translator must be capable of logical, analytical thought and possess technical insight. He must have patience and mental resillience, perception, memory, in a narrow sense, recall and recognition, an immense curiosity and an obsessive thirst for knowledge.

Let us hope that we will find many young people with these qualities and talents who want to be challenged by such a program.

Abstract

Rose Marie A. Marfurt, University of Missouri at Kansas City

Title: Initiation of an Academic Program Designed to Prepare Students for a Career in Translating and Interpreting

Audience: Foreign language faculty and students of universities and colleges.

Summary:

The presentation is directed to faculty of departments of foreign languages of universities and colleges contemplating the initiation of academic programs designed to prepare students for a career in translating and interpreting.

My guidelines are designed with the student in mind who wants a minor or a Bachelor of Arts in Translating and Interpreting, particularly in the field of scientific-technical and business-legal translation.

A student who succesfully completed a four year program covering the suggested areas of knowledge and skills, will have a basic competence as translator from one foreign language into English, or in very exceptional cases, from English into the foreign language. The student should be qualified to enter an institution which specializes in graduate level training for translators and interpreters, or to begin on-the-job training in a governmental agency, in an industrial translation department, or as free-lance translator.

In view of the growing sense of uncertainty in both, education and international business, any curricular planning with occupational goals should offer some room for career mobility to our students.

The translator program could furthermore be applied in a more intense and accelerated manner in summer workshops for interested foreign language teachers who want to acquire translation skills or simply to be retrained.

The paper will be supported with handouts for language educators and program developers, as well as for students, and they will contain the following information:

1. Proposed syllabus
2. List of graduate programs offering translator and interpreter training
3. List of employment opportunities

Appendix 1 Marfurt appendix 1

Proposed Syllabus

Required Courses for the B.A. in Translating/Interpreting
(A more detailed description of the courses was discussed in the paper).

I. Courses in the Foreign Language: 30 hours minimum

110/120 Elementary French I/II (8)* 1st/2nd semester
200 Introduction to the Art of Translating (3) 1st semester
250 Development of Listening Skills (1) 1st semester
255 Translation from English into the Target Language (3) 2nd semester
280 Discussions in the Target Language on a Wide Range of Topics (2) 2nd semester
380 Contemporary Cultural Aspects Studies (3) 1st semester
355 Exercises in Translation from Source Language into Target Language (3) 1st semester
360 Introduction to Foreign Language Literature (3) 1st semester
370 Masterpieces of Foreign Language Literature (3) 2nd semester
350 Development of Listening Skills (1) 2nd semester
355 Translation of Specific Subject Matters (2) 2nd semester
410 Introduction to Onsight Translation onto Tape, Source Language-Target Language and Vice-Versa (1), more hours optional 1st semester
455 Simultaneous Interpreting Exercises in a Simulated Conference Situation (3) 1st semester
480 Contemporary Cultural Aspects Studies (3) 1st semester
490 Consecutive Interpretation into English or Target Language (3) 2nd semester
470 Commercial and Legal Translation (2) 2nd semester
460 Technical Translation (2) 2nd semester

* do not count towards a major

Appendix 2

II. General Requirements and Electives: 85 hours minimum

(Reasons for enrolling in these courses were discussed in paper).

First year	24 hours	1st/2nd semester
Second year	23 hours	1st/2nd semester
Third year	18 hours	1st/2nd semester
Fourth year	18 hours	1st/2nd semester

English	in addition to the required courses, enroll in
	Creative Writing
	Technical Writing
	Theory and Practice in Composition
	Surveys of Literature
Communication Studies	Public Speaking
Foreign Languages	French, German, Spanish, (other than major)
Mathematics	(required courses)
Sciences	Biology
	Chemistry
	Physics
Political Science	
Economics	
History	
Geography	
Philosophy	
Business	